



SR0059

LRB095 10932 KXB 31223 r

1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2

WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Willye B. White of Chicago, the first American to compete in five Olympics, who passed away on February 6, 2007; and

3

4

5

6

WHEREAS, Willye White was born December 31, 1939, in Money, Mississippi, and grew up in Greenwood; and

7

8

WHEREAS, Willye B. White competed in every Olympics from 1956 to 1972, with only an injury keeping her from the 1976 team; in 1956 she was a 16-year old high school sophomore at her first Olympics when she won a silver medal in the long jump; she won another silver medal in the 4 X 100 meter relay in 1964; and

9

10

11

12

13

14

WHEREAS, She was America's best female long jumper for almost two decades, with a career best of 21 feet 6 inches; she won nine consecutive United States outdoor championships, set seven American records and competed in 150 nations; and

15

16

17

18

WHEREAS, Willye White stood 5 feet 4 inches and 130 pounds, and she could perform weightlifting squats with more than 380 pounds; and

19

20

1 WHEREAS, She once reflected that she only could get
2 recognition through sports; she started track as a 10-year-old
3 sprinter, turning to the long jump because the field of
4 sprinters was so large at that time, and there were few people
5 in the long jump competition; and

6 WHEREAS, Willye White entered Tennessee State University,
7 where the track coach was the renowned Ed Temple; another
8 future Olympian, the sprinter Wilma Rudolph, was a teammate;
9 she left the school after six months; in 1960 she moved to
10 Chicago and, in 1976, earned a degree in public health
11 administration from Chicago State University; she began a
12 career as a practical nurse and spent 37 years working in city
13 government as a health administrator, a director of
14 recreational services, and a creator of sports programs for
15 young girls in housing projects; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1991, she founded the Willye White Foundation
17 to help children develop self-esteem; she was elected to eleven
18 halls of fame including the International Women's Sports Hall
19 of Fame, the National Track and Field Hall of Fame, and the
20 Black Sports Hall of Fame; and

21 WHEREAS, Willye White is survived by her brother and her
22 sister; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL
2 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
3 her family and friends, the passing of Willye B. White; and be
4 it further

5 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
6 presented to the family of Willye B. White as a symbol of our
7 respect and sympathy.